

DRAFT

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

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SEAPOWER SUBCOMMITTEE

ON SUBMARINE WARFARE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Chairwoman Snowe, Members of the Seapower Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the role submarines will play in 21st Century warfare. In my

opening remarks, I would like to describe in broad terms the challenges facing your Navy's Submarine Force today, from an operational perspective, followed by an overview of both the unique and the complementary capabilities submarines bring to the warfighting Commanders-in-Chief. Informed by this background, I would like to conclude by outlining the capabilities submarines will need in the 21st century to maintain the undersea dominance critical to our Nation's security.

INTRODUCTION

As a first step, I wanted to outline my responsibilities as Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (COMSUBLANT). Understandably, these responsibilities deeply shape my perspective and help form my personal and professional views. COMSUBLANT holds traditional Navy Type Commander responsibilities as a force provider to train, equip and maintain the submarines assigned to the Atlantic Fleet. With the reorganization of the CNO's staff in 1992, COMSUBLANT acquired additional responsibilities in these areas for the entire Submarine Force as the senior submarine community sponsor. However, COMSUBLANT is unique among Type Commanders in its operational responsibilities for fleet units. As Commander, Task Force 42, I operate Atlantic Fleet attack submarines. As Commander, Task Force 144, I operate, on behalf of the Strategic Command, Atlantic Fleet ballistic missile submarines. In addition, as Commander, Task Force 84, the Atlantic Fleet special surveillance and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) commander, I operate submarines, Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), surface ships assigned by the Second Fleet and Integrated Undersea Surveillance System assets for ASW purposes. As the NATO commander of Submarines Allied Command Atlantic, I am responsible for submarine policy issues to both the Supreme Allied

Commander Atlantic and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. These Allied and U.S. responsibilities for submarine policy and submarine operation have given me in-depth insight in framing my view of submarine requirements for the future.

SUBMARINE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

As an entering discussion, I would like to review changes in our overall Submarine Force structure over the last decade. Since 1989, the Submarine Force has seen enormous changes, in conjunction with the entire defense establishment. Submarine Force personnel have declined from approximately 68,000 Sailors in 1989 to a total of about 28,000 today. Attack submarines have declined from a high of 103 to 58 today. Ballistic missile submarines have shifted from a mixed force of 36 SSBNs to a two ocean, all Trident Fleet of 18. And submarine tenders have declined from 12 to 4 today, soon to be reduced to our 2 forward deployed tenders in Guam and La Maddalena, Italy. As I alluded to, this is not a phenomenon unique to the Submarine Force. Navy-wide personnel levels have declined from 592,000 in 1989 to 368,000 today. Ships in commission have declined from 592 to 324. Aircraft carriers, the core of our carrier battle groups, have declined from 15 to 12. The magnitude of these changes and the challenges they pose in operations, maintenance and personnel policy is significant. My staff and I deal with these challenges every day.

Yet, as the Submarine Force structure has contracted from Cold War levels, the threats to which your Navy's submarines are responding have proliferated. From a single, well understood and formidable threat, we have transitioned to a world of multiple, poorly understood and unpredictable challenges around the world. Kosovo, Korea, the Persian Gulf, terrorism, international drug cartels – these are some of the

national security challenges around the globe to which the United States Navy and its submarines are responding every single day. To do so, the Navy today is a power projection Navy and submarines operate as power projection forces around the world. To be able to project American power around the world, throughout the year, for the foreseeable future, the Submarine Force is a forward deployed, rotational force. To put it simply, there are three types of submarines:

- Submarines preparing to deploy
- Submarines on deployment
- Submarines returning from deployment

In our Submarine Force of 58 attack submarines, on any given day about 50 are considered operationally ready; in other words ready for sea in a short period of time. However, factoring in crew training and leave, PERSTEMPO and OPTEMPO limits and required maintenance, we provide about 12 forward deployed submarines to the warfighting CINCs. In a major theater war scenario, we can ignore normal operating limits and surge all our operationally ready submarines to defend the nation's interests. But, over the long term, those operations cannot be sustained.

Today, we are already at the limits of the sustainable and we must repeatedly say “no” to important requirements in the interests of long term sustainability and as a result of the reduction in submarine assets. As examples:

- Last year USS BOISE (SSN 764) was pulled out of a U. S. Atlantic Command sponsored joint US, UK and Norwegian exercise to meet emergent European Command theater tasking in the Mediterranean which included coverage of Tomahawk strike packages.

- I recently cancelled U.S. submarine participation in the major biannual NATO “Battle Griffin” exercise in the North Atlantic to sortie USS PITTSBURGH to meet submarine tasking in the Central Command theater.
- I am meeting the bare minimum requirement for submarine contributions to counter drug operations in the Southern Command theater. This is despite the Director of the Joint Interagency Task Force East’s praise of submarines as the most effective platform for the detection of “go fast” drug running boats, citing submarines as the greatest force multiplier (by a factor of 4) he can bring to bear in his anti-drug campaign.
- I am unable to meet European Command requests for 4 SSNs in the Mediterranean or for year round Dry Deck Shelter SSN presence for Special Warfare purposes.
- As with our carrier battle groups and their attached submarines, we also routinely have to retask our forward deployed submarines in the Atlantic, European and Pacific theaters, sending them to the Central Command theater to respond to yet another crisis.

As we decommission 20% of the Atlantic Fleet attack submarines in fiscal year 1999 alone, the value of each individual submarine has risen substantially. As a submarine operator and as a force provider of submarines to other theaters, my staff and I are working hard to become ever more efficient in our scheduling and operations. In conjunction with larger Navy initiatives directed by the CNO and our Fleet commanders, deployment training and certification have been streamlined and mission focused. All Atlantic attack submarine deployments have been lengthened to 6 months, effectively

reducing the amount of predeployment “overhead” imposed on our deploying submarines. Our SSBN force has been integrated to meet some local submarine training and service requirements formerly fulfilled only by SSNs to help further reduce some of the burden on our SSN force, without compromising SSBN strategic commitments. Unnecessary or redundant inspections have been combined or eliminated. Even so, these changes, while important for improving the proficiency and combat readiness of our force, cannot overcome the tyranny of a smaller force structure. The CNO-mandated PERSTEMPO minimum turnaround ratio between deployments greater than 56 days requires that crews spend twice the time in homeport between deployments that they spent deployed. This 2 to 1 turnaround ratio means that for every deployed submarine doing the nation’s business, 2 submarines will be in home port or home waters. As a Submarine Force, we have determined that the minimum turnaround ratio that we can sustain over the long term is 3 to 1 and still maintain adequate training and proficiency, safe material conditions, adequate reactor core life and, most importantly, quality of life for our Sailors. This operational cycle of 6 month deployments followed by 18 months of operations from home port is among the most aggressive in the Navy and provides my staff and I with one of our greatest ongoing challenges.

As a result and in response to the multi-mission “pull” of the warfighting CINCs, each of my submarines is a multi-mission, multi-theater asset which we flow, as needed, from one mission to another and from one theater to another. The multi-mission tasking imposed on submarines as a result will drive multi-mission requirements for the submarines of the 21st century. I would like to discuss briefly some of these missions in greater detail.

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE

The need for both strategic and tactical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission-days has risen inexorably since the end of the Cold War. Despite a reduction of about 50% in submarine ISR assets, ISR mission-days have doubled to meet the intelligence needs of a dynamic and unstable world. The sustained, undetected presence of a submarine provides unique opportunities to gather this data in an unobserved and non-provocative manner that cannot be replicated by other means. Employing multiple sensors and operated with care and cunning, submarines can monitor events in the air, surface, or subsurface littoral domain providing a complete picture of an event across the full spectrum of intelligence disciplines. They are also an intelligence “force-multiplier” by providing tip-offs of high interest events to other collection assets. Submarines are able to monitor undersea events and phenomena not detectable by any other sensor. Since they are able to conduct extended operations in areas inaccessible to other platforms or systems, submarines can intercept signals of critical importance for monitoring international developments and enable a wide array of military operations. Furthermore, the ability to dwell covertly for extended periods defeats efforts to evade collection or deceive satellites and other sensors. The unique look angle provided by a submarine operating in the littoral region enables it to intercept high interest signal formats that are inaccessible to reconnaissance satellites or other collection platforms. The intelligence gleaned from submarine operations ranges from highly technical details of military platforms, command and control infrastructure, weapons systems and sensors to unique intelligence of great importance to national policymakers on potential adversaries' strategic and operational intentions. Significantly, our submarines can

provide real time alertment to National Command Authorities on indications of imminent hostilities. And unlike other intelligence collection systems such as satellites, submarines are also full-fledged warfighting platforms carrying militarily significant offensive firepower. We continue to work to upgrade our ISR sensors and to install the secure and stealthy connectivity to provide real time data to battle group commanders, theater CINCs and our national leaders.

STRIKE

The recent events in the Balkans and Persian Gulf have again featured the power projection capabilities of our Navy. The Submarine Force is playing ever more prominently in this role. SSNs have contributed to every operation requiring combat launches of Tomahawks. For example, USS MIAMI homeported in Groton, CT and now in the Mediterranean, has launched Tomahawk missiles in strike packages in both Operation Desert Fox and Operation Allied Force. She is also our first submarine since World War II to launch weapons against targets in different theaters. Submarines consistently provide about 20% of any given carrier battle group's Tomahawk loadout. Submarine tenders provide our only in-theater mobile Tomahawk reload asset, for both submarines and surface ships. And submarines provide the Navy with a unique stealthy, long term, on station surprise or "no notice" strike capability.

ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE

While a traditional strength of the Navy during the Cold War, anti-submarine warfare capability and proficiency has waned with the reduced submarine force levels, resource constraints on modernizing existing ASW sensors and a decrease in fleet ASW

training opportunities. ASW is now more difficult against new generations of quiet nuclear and diesel submarines and will become increasingly critical as potential adversaries around the world become proficient in operating the highly capable submarines currently available on the international arms market. The CNO's ASW Assessment points the way to improve near-term ASW proficiency.

As Commander, Task Force 84, my staff and I know the importance of "combined arms" ASW and must deal with the constraints imposed by limited resources and multi-mission tasking for the Maritime Patrol Aircraft and the Integrated Undersea Surveillance System communities. As an example, of 16 MPAs forward deployed by Commander, Patrol Wings Atlantic, the Atlantic MPA force provider, 4 are available in Keflavik for ASW operations, the remainder supporting surveillance operations in Kosovo or counter-drug operations in the Caribbean.

As Commander, Task Force 42, my staff and I work hard to make submarines available to retain proficiency in this core Navy competency. With only about 5 submarines available for local operations at any given time, we are challenged to provide realistic ASW training opportunities for submarines, MPA and surface ships. We look for opportunities during our 6 month deployments to build proficiency with our allies, though many exercises succumb to real world emergent tasking.

Overall, we are working hard to make the most of these assets. The submarine force is focused on extracting the maximum acoustic data from existing sonar arrays through improved training, maintenance and sensor processing. Submariners are working with the MPA community to develop new ASW tactics. We are carefully building deployment schedules to ensure the right submarines and IUSS surveillance ships are

deployed at the right time to the right areas with the best equipment and most proficient crews available.

INTEGRATION INTO THE JOINT FORCE

As you can see, we in the Silent Service have significant warfighting capabilities that can contribute to the Joint Force Commander's battle, and our inherent advantages in stealth, agility and endurance can be applied to create additional capabilities for use by those commanders. We are making existing capabilities known to the joint warfighting community, and we're actively pursuing ways to integrate these capabilities.

Given recent events in the Balkans, submarine contributions to the combined air campaign against Serbia are perhaps the best known of our joint operational capabilities. Since we first launched Tomahawks during Desert Storm, the contributions that submarines make to the overall TLAM strike effort are increasing as a percentage of that overall effort. In Desert Storm, submarines launched just 4.25% of the Tomahawks successfully fired. As of 5 April, in our Allied Force operations, Allied submarines fired 26% TLAMs successfully launched. Submarine strike operations were fully integrated into the Allied battle plan, complementing Allied tactical air operations.

We also have a long and intimate relationship with the United States Special Operations Command, dating back to the standup of that organization. For many years we had two converted ballistic missile submarines dedicated to SOCOM support, USS KAMEHAMEHA and USS JAMES K. POLK. With the recent decommissioning of JAMES K. POLK and the imminent decommissioning of KAMEHAMEHA, we're working on ways to execute our joint SOCOM missions with our LOS ANGELES (688) and Improved LOS ANGELES (688I) class submarines.

We train as we fight. The most common venue for that training is the Joint Task Force Exercise that precedes the deployment of every carrier battle group. Two submarines are included in each of those battle groups, which deploy roughly each quarter. We train to both our joint strike and SOF tasks in these and other venues. Because we flow forces from theater to theater, it is imperative that we conduct realistic multi-mission training.

Because the Submarine Force is operating in the joint arena with seriousness of purpose, the Navy's new emphasis on experimentation and U.S. Atlantic Command's new experimentation mandate provide us with the best opportunities for adapting our capabilities to the Joint Force Commander's needs. Experimentation provides the opportunity to develop concepts, evaluate how those concepts fit the warfighting requirements established by warfighting CINCs, identify the architectures necessary to implement those concepts, and then test them in experimental events.

We know that our principal challenge to full integration into the joint world will be the connectivity we need with joint command structures. Having been the Silent Service for so long, we're doubly challenged to overcome our own culture of silence and the technical challenges of moving vast amounts of data through the surface of the sea. But we're rising to that challenge. We have detailed plans to upgrade the connectivity of all battle group submarines to achieve full Secret Internet Protocol Network (SIPRNET) connectivity and to upgrade other communications links. The Joint Force Commander needs our stealth, our agility, and our endurance to achieve full spectrum dominance. The Submarine Force is working hard to meet this need.

PERSONNEL AND MAINTENANCE = THE KEYS TO READINESS

The above are some of the key missions submarines today are involved in. I hope to be able to elaborate more on these missions in the Subcommittee's closed session.

While personnel issues are not a direct concern of this subcommittee, my Sailors are central to all of the capabilities the Submarine Force can bring to bear. I feel I would be remiss in not briefly discussing personnel. This is not a unique submarine or even a unique Navy concern. However, the small size of submarine crews, where even 1 or 2 Sailors can make a big difference in crew capability, and the demand for highly technically trained Sailors places special burdens on those responsible for manning our submarines. I take this burden very seriously.

In my 10 months as SUBLANT, I have gone to sea on 10 submarines, visited another 29 support commands and submarines in port and have spoken to over 2500 Sailors. They are motivated, eager and forthright in their discussions with me, with over three-quarters of their questions devoted to their quality of life concerns. As a result of these discussions, I have made improving their life at sea and in port my top priority. In conjunction with the CNO and Secretary Danzig's initiatives, I'm looking for ways for us to "work smarter" not harder at the deckplate level. Installing garbage grinders on our submarines (which, perhaps surprisingly, significantly reduce Sailor housekeeping workload while at sea) and using corrosion resistant materials and techniques to reduce traditional Navy painting and chipping are very simple examples in this area. At the Type Commander level, we're tackling the workload imposed on our crews, seeking ways to eliminate unnecessary preventive maintenance and to ensure the right level of maintenance support from our shore based infrastructure. Navy wide pay and

reenlistment and recruiting initiatives are key to the personnel health of the Submarine Force as well. The CNO's "pay triad" of base pay increases, pay table reform and REDUX retirement reform will go a long way to ensure the viability of a long term Navy career in the minds of our Sailors, especially important at the end of a decade long period of retrenchment in the defense establishment.

In a similar vein, submarine maintenance is a central pillar of our Force's readiness. Similar in importance to the aviation Flying Hour Program or the surface ship Steaming Day funding, submarine maintenance funding directly affects which of our submarines can go to sea on any given day. With the dramatic drawdown in submarine tenders and Navy initiatives to both consolidate and regionalize maintenance, submarine maintenance programs are in a challenging state of flux. My staff works closely with the technical community, the maintenance commands and submarine waterfront personnel to ensure that the proper resources are in place to meet the rigorous demands of submarine maintenance. Without strong and sustained support for fleet submarine maintenance funds, immediate shortfalls in submarine services would appear and the long-term health of the Submarine Force would degrade.

NEEDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY SUBMARINE FORCE

Given this review of submarine force structure, submarine mission areas and the inexorable pull for submarine services, I would like to close with my views on the requirements for submarines as we enter the 21st century.

First, I cannot stress strongly enough the needs for adequate numbers of submarines. While each individual submarine with its highly capable crew can be a marvel of technology and engineering, at some point quantity becomes its own quality.

Exhaustive studies of submarine employment, many of which I have personally participated in as COMSUBLANT and in my previous tour as Director of Submarine Warfare, have all come to the conclusion reached by the Defense Science Board study on the Submarine of the Future – that submarines are a crown jewel of our nation’s defense establishment and that we need more, not fewer attack submarines. Although the QDR directed force level of 50 SSNs is sufficient to meet requirements for 2 Major Theater Wars and is capable of supporting small scale contingencies envisioned, the Fleet Commanders-in-Chief have validated peacetime requirements for 72 attack submarines. . I must forcefully state that, in my view, 50 SSNs is an absolute lower limit to the number of attack submarines that the nation needs. We are gapping requirements and exceeding sustainable deployed OPTEMPO now with 58 SSNs. Even more critical requirements will be gapped when we reach 50. We must take action now to stabilize SSN force structure for the long term at no fewer than the 50 SSN lower limit.

Second, continued stealth is paramount. Submarine contributions depend heavily on their stealth ability. We must protect and enhance acoustic and non-acoustic stealth as our first order of business. For submarines, stealth = survivability. Stealth is the ultimate form of self-protection and it is this quality which first and foremost allows surprise.

Third, submarines’ connectivity must be augmented to take full advantage of their ISR and strike potential and integrate fully into joint operations. While strides have been made which belie our reputation as the Silent Service, we must work harder to improve our bandwidth capabilities while maintaining stealth

Fourth, the Submarine Force must be a full partner in future weapons and payload developments to ensure we can bring the capabilities required to the warfighting CINCs.

Submarine involvement in Tomahawk development from its inception is a good model to build on, but we must ensure that we expand our payload capability where it makes sense. Additional combat capability is the key metric here.

Fifth, new submarines must be built with ease of maintenance firmly in place. With life of ship cores and a deliberate reduction in depot level and modernization repair periods, we must take advantage of modular construction, advanced coatings, commercial off the shelf (COTS) components and high technology to reduce the maintenance burdens placed on the backs of our Sailors. Otherwise, the ships will not perform optimally throughout their design lifetime and our personnel challenges will become exacerbated.

Sixth, ongoing submarine maintenance needs robust support. A staple of day-to-day readiness, our maintenance infrastructure and spare parts supplies are a continuing source of concern for me as a Type Commander.

Finally, our submarines must be manned by the right people in the right numbers. Here again, quantity imparts its own quality, measured here in quality of life. Submarines, manned below their authorized strength and with Sailors missing the skills needed to fight and maintain these technical marvels, cannot deliver combat capability to the warfighting CINCs. This is a long-term, unavoidable challenge. The Ensigns and Seamen reporting to their first submarines this year will become the Commanding Officers and the Chiefs of the Boat of the year 2015. We must work hard to attract and retain the nation's best and brightest to be able to take our submarines into harm's way and, more importantly, to bring them back intact.

Your strong support of submarine modernization programs and the VIRGINIA class construction program to provide a highly capable Submarine Force in sufficient

numbers will go a long way to insuring that the U.S. Navy retains its preeminence as a power projection force now and in the future.

Chairwoman Snowe and members of the Seapower Subcommittee, thank you for the honor of testifying today. I stand ready to answer your questions.